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Science and Engineering Academies: Facing a Split?

"We're guests on the premises of a benevolent dictatorship," says Courtland D. Perkins, president of the National Academy of Engineering, which, back in 1964, came into being as a separate and unequal affiliate of the venerable National Academy of Sciences.

Since then, there have been various ups and downs in the relationship between the NAS and the NAE, whose founding came in response to engineers' complaints that the science-oriented NAS was giving them neither their due share of honorary recognition, nor sufficient opportunities to advise the federal government on technical issues.

Lately, with little public notice, the relationship has entered a new down phase, which, though characterized by politeness and respect between the two academies, could eventually lead to a realignment of their relationship — in favor of more power and influence for the engineers — or a total split that would send them in separate directions. To examine what's going on, it's useful to look back to the circumstances that led to the founding of the NAE as a branch of the NAS.

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Fearing that a separate engineering academy would dilute the influence of the century-old science academy in its Congressionally chartered role as adviser to the federal government, the scientists offered the engineers a deal — known as the Seitz plan, after Frederick Seitz, then president of the NAS. Come in with us, said the NAS, and we'll work together, though NAS will remain the exclusive charter holder, and legally and operationally, NAE will be subordinate to the science academy. The lure was that the restless engineers would be spared the problems of raising funds and setting up shop. And that's how the National Academy of Engineering became a subordinate wing of the National Academy of Sciences.

There's general agreement today that the arrangement has worked out reasonably well. But now that the NAE is approaching the NAS in size of membership — roughly 850 and 1300, respectively — politely worded discontent is being voiced by Perkins, a Princeton University engineer who came to office in 1975 to serve out the unexpired term of Robert Seamans upon his appointment as head of the Energy Research and Development Administration. Seamans was a healer in NAS-NAE affairs, smoothing over a good deal of irritation that had developed between his predecessor, Clarence Linder, a gruff industrial engineer, and Philip Handler, the imperious and irascible biologist who heads the science academy. Perkins has carried on with efforts to get along well with the scientists, and he has.

But in a long conversation recently with SGR, he observed that while he and Handler have developed a congenial working relationship, both will be relinquishing office within the next four years, and Perkins is concerned about what might happen after that.

The present situation, he says, "couldn't be friendlier," but looking to an uncertain future, Perkins insists, "We want to share in the governance of the Academy," which, under the present arrangement, is firmly in the hands of the science segment of the corporate entity known as the National Academy of Sciences. "If we get an unfriendly NAS president," he

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In Brief

Top brass of the vast Department of Energy are still crammed into spare office space in the President's Executive Office Building while delay after delay holds up their acquisition of the spacious Forrestal Building, a Defense Department annex in downtown Washington. Meanwhile, other parts of the Energy empire are in an office building near the Capitol and far away in suburban Maryland.

Any day now the National Cancer Institute is supposed to issue a final report on an explosive subject: Whether false positives in an NCI-supported breast cancer screening program led to needless mastectomies for 48 women, possibly more. A review of tissue specimens by a group of pathologists failed to confirm the presence of cancer; but a review group headed by a surgeon said that when all the medical factors involved are considered, surgery was appropriate in almost all the questioned cases.

The job market through 1985, according to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the Department of Labor: Slow growth for aerospace engineers; good prospects for chemists, except in academe; bright outlook for health service administrators, slow growth for physicists, especially in university jobs.

. . . NAE Head: "This Place Could Blow Up"

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says, "they could cut us up. We want to be immune to that," he adds, predicting that "unless some changes are made, this place could blow up."

Situated as "a guest on the premises," in Perkins' words, the NAE has little bargaining power in such crucial matters as appointing staff members, influencing federal agencies to ask the Academy to perform studies that the Academy wants to perform — an old ploy in Academy-government relations — and in representing engineering before Congress. One reason for this, Perkins feels, is that the NAE is financially dependent on the NAS — and he's trying to do something about that.

In his annual report to the NAE membership last November, Perkins very candidly discussed this and related matters, noting that he has initiated a drive to raise funds for NAE from major industrial firms. As of that report, he had received multi-year pledges totaling $1.2 million.

"We feel," he reported to the membership, "that this campaign will be successful and will provide a financial posture for the NAE that will make many things possible in the years ahead." To which Perkins added: "Having significant independent resources is extremely important for the NAE at this period of its development. David Packard [the Hewlett-Packard Company founder and former Deputy Secretary of Defense] put this very well when he agreed to contribute to our Fund. He told me, 'You seem to be in a poker game without any chips.' I am determined to provide the NAE with chips."

(The "chips," it might be pointed out, are coming from the blue chips of American industry, including: Exxon, McDonnell Douglas, General Electric, Boeing, Bechtel, General Motors, TRW, Fairchild Industries, IBM, Mobil Oil, Grumman, Lockheed, and Hughes. In this era of friction-filled relations between industry and government, it may be assumed that they foresee some considerable value in having a new friend in Washington).

Perkins generally shies away from direct criticism of the science academy, but a reading of last year's report to the NAE members shows that he's not impressed with one of NAS President Handler's proudest achievements — a massive internal reorganization of the complex Academy structure. To the bewilderment of many, this resulted in the creation of a series of disciplinary Assemblies and Commissions that feed into the National Research Council, the Academy's in-house agency for actually carrying out its advisory duties for government.

Under the reorganization, the President of the NAE serves as head of the Assembly of Engineering, and it is mainly in that capacity, rather than as NAE President, that Perkins relates to the outside world.

Said Perkins in his report: "I think it is important now that consideration be given to changing this. We might consider new names for Assemblies and Commissions as their present ones continue to confuse most people, particularly our sponsors, and have little meaning in themselves. I also believe that the NAE President should no longer serve as chairman of the AE [Assembly of Engineering]. This is a holdover from the merger agreement at which time both parties were still somewhat suspicious of each other. . . This arrangement is now counterproductive. It is important for the NAE to demonstrate its concern for the total NRC [National Research Council], not just the AE. I have found it difficult in dealing with NRC divisions other than the AE due to this special attachment, and I plan to take steps to remedy this situation."

And this brings Perkins to his "ultimate objective of rearranging the corporate structure at the top," which he deems desirable because "As the NAE grows in strength, both in numbers and resources, and as it participates more actively in the intellectual activity of the total organization, it will be essential that the NAE be involved more fully in the total corporate governance. We must continue to work towards this end, but with a credible rationale and posture."

Perkins then went on to propose an historic change, namely, that the National Academy of Sciences be dis-

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. . . Perkins Wants Bigger Role on Board

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solved as a corporate — though not as an honorary — entity, and replaced by an organization to be known as National Academies, Inc. The governing board of the new organization would consist of eight NAS members, six from the NAE, and two from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), which is even further down the line from the NAE in the internal affairs of the presentday Academy.

Each academy and the IOM would have its own membership and council, as at present, but in the crucial matter of running the National Research Council, the same 8-6-2 membership would apply to the NRC governing board. In short, what Perkins is proposing is that the Academy of Sciences put itself out of existence and then reappear as a member of an organization in which authority would be shared with the engineers and the present subdivision that's concerned with medical matters. With eight of 16 board members, the NAS could not be outvoted; however, it would not, of itself, constitute a majority.

In his report to the NAE members, Perkins concluded with the observation, "We are learning to live with the complicated arrangement that we have with the NAS. The relationship today between our Academies is friendly and cooperative and we have made great progress in working together on many activities. We continue to feel that this close arrangement with the NAS is a correct one, and it has been a great asset to the NAE during its formative years. I believe progress can and will be made in integrating our affairs in the future, but this can only come about when the NAE becomes more equal in resources both human and financial, and is able to contribute even more to the intellectual life of the community. To do this is our major goal."

Perkins says that next year, he'll ask the NAS Council to respond to his proposal for reconstituting the organization as the National Academies, Inc.

"If they say no," he adds, "it will be up to my successor to decide what to do. Meanwhile, Perkins continues to collect funds for the NAE, and stands by his warning that "this place could blow up" if NAE isn't given the authority and recognition he is seeking.—DSG

The Leisurely Pace of Committee Work at the Academy

A frequent complaint about the advisory performance of the National Academy of Sciences is that its studies often take so long to complete that the results are obsolete.

One reason for this is that Academy — which is to say its operating arm, the National Research Council — depends upon the parttime services of outsiders to perform the studies. Most of them are very busy with their fulltime occupations, and the result is that it's difficult to schedule meetings to bring them together. Courtland Perkins, president of the NAE, wryly notes that he knows of some NAS studies that have been in the works for years. "And they don't matter any more," he says, "because there's no one waiting for them."

In this connection, Perkins points with pride at a serious and important technical study that the Assembly of Engineering — which he heads — recently completed for the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space. Titled, "Technical Status of the Space Shuttle Main Engine," the report was produced by an eight-member ad hoc committee chaired by Eugene Covert, professor of aeronautics and astronautics at MIT — in five weeks, which is probably record time for any serious Academy enterprise.

Perkins says the key to this swift performance was simple: "We didn't let them go home until they had written the report."

We can't cite with certainty the all-time record for snail-like performance by the Academy of Sciences in its proudly held role as adviser to the federal government. But a leading contender is its Committee on Nuclear and Alternative Energy Systems.

Established in 1975 at the request of the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Committee was assigned the task of producing what was intended to be the definitive study of energy technologies — states of the arts, needs, opportunities, problems, relative costs, and so forth.

Appointed to head the committee were two high-powered veterans of the federal advisory scene: Harvey Brooks, of Harvard, and Edward Ginzton, chairman of the board of Varian Associates.

Vast chunks of manuscript have actually been completed, but none of it — with a minor exception — has been found suitable for publication by the Academy's own Report Review Committee. Chapter One, an overview of the report, has been through *eleven* rewrites, and is still considered so poor that the Academy won't release it.

Academy staffers say they long ago lost track of how much has been spent on this glacial enterprise. But one of them says the costs so far easily exceed $3 million.

"Consensus" Bill Would Revamp Drug Regulation

A bill that calls for massive changes in the federal rules for bringing new pharmaceutical drugs to market is now under serious consideration in Congress. And if it goes through — even with the many modifications that are to be expected — the effects are likely to be profound for many segments of the biomedical research community.

Whether the bill, titled the Drug Regulation Reform Act of 1978, is better or worse than the present law that governs the Food and Drug Administration — well, that's a matter of taste as well as booming controversy. But it is indeed very different, so much so, in fact, that while HEW Secretary Joseph Califano calls it a "consensus bill," various parties to that alleged consesus are digging in for a fight over major provisions.

In SGR's view, the bill tilts toward satisfying the interests of the pharmaceutical industry, mainly by lowering the testing requirements for getting new drugs on the market. But, at the same time, it does exact a price from industry, in the form of requirements for industry to make public a great deal of scientific and clinical test data that it can now withhold; in addition, the speed-up in the approval process is accompanied by a requirement for industry to monitor its products for adverse reactions after they have been cleared for general use — something that's now done in a haphazard and unreliable manner.

These and other provisions in the bill were worked out in the course of an extraordinary process that one Senate aide refers to as "pre-legislative legislating," a reference to numerous meetings involving HEW, FDA, key House and Senate figures, consumer groups and the drug manufacturers. The bill that resulted, covering 228 pages, reflects, in Califano's view, a consensus developed during those meetings, which are said to have totaled about 100 hours. In a sense, the proceedings are far longer than that, since the bill also embodies many concepts that were developed over more than a decade of incessant Congressional probing into FDA and its activities, as well as the recent two-year inquiry into FDA that was conducted by HEW's Panel on New Drug Regulation.

The most fundamental change that would be created by the proposed legislation is in the regulatory process that governs testing procedures for new drugs. The present system, which has been widely criticized as needlessly expensive and cumbersome, calls for starting with toxicity tests on animals; if the results are satisfactory, this is followed by three phases of testing on humans. When all the results are in, an application then may be made to FDA for permission to market the drug. But it can, and often does, take years for FDA to make a decision; it's not unusual, for example, for FDA to find fault with some of the test procedures, and require the manufacturer to go back and do it again. In any case, the test data, under the present system, is available for examination only by FDA and its advisory committees. The process may be slow, but the company seeking approval has assurance that its investment in research and clinical testing will not be available to competitors.

Under the new bill, the testing process would be shortened. The manufacturer would be permitted to start out with an "innovational" testing phase in which both limited human and animal tests could take place simultaneously. FDA's only concern would be, at this point, with assurances that human test subjects are not being exposed to "unreasonable risks."

At a press briefing, Califano said that "the vast majority" of drugs are dropped very early in the test cycle, and predicted that the speed-up permitted in the innovational phase would cut costs and save resources "without appreciable increase in the risk to the human participants in the tests." Whether that's so, remains to be seen; details are lacking on how FDA is to assess the risks, and besides, with protection of human subjects of experimentation an object of tighter federal scrutiny, movement toward allowing greater risks raises some interesting policy questions. But at least as things now stand, that provision is a part of the bill.

The next phase, titled "developmental," calls for the manufacturer to obtain FDA approval for a general testing plan, including a description of the measures that will be taken to protect human subjects. To avoid post-testing squabbles about the adequacy of the plan, FDA will issue guidelines for research and advisory opinions on particular research protocols.

When the research is completed, the manufacturer will be eligible to apply for a "monograph," which is sort of an all-time file for the particular drug, specifying its chemistry, therapeutic record, and various other data. Once issued, the monograph is the official pedigree of that drug. And, in another big change under the proposed legislation, any other firm that wants to produce the drug has only to establish that it's conforming to the monograph; it doesn't have to repeat the tests or provide its own scientific data — which will presumably save a lot of money by avoiding duplication, something that the Carter Administration is keen to do in medical matters.

The process, thus, is designed to be simpler and faster, not only in terms of test procedures, but also in requirements for FDA to act swiftly upon new drug applications. The bill specifies that once an application is found to be in acceptable form, FDA has to produce

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. . . Industry Says Research in US Would Suffer

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a yes or no within about a year — record time compared to the present pace. Industry, in fact, says it doubts that FDA can do it, regardless of what the legislation commands.

The presumed speed, though, comes at a price, namely, information. To qualify for a license, industry will have to go through a public hearing for which it must make available *all* of its test data. FDA says competitors will be barred from the data; industry responds with serious doubts as to how that's really possible if any and all persons, apart from identifiable competitors, can get the papers. Califano responds to this by emphasizing that in return for disclosure, a firm would be given a virtually ironclad five-year exclusive license for manufacturing the drug. Industry predicts that the disclosure provision will drive research abroad. Califano says that's nonsense, since the information can't be used for five years by any competitor.

The object, of course, is to make up for the abridged test period by broadening the scrutiny of drugs that may come to market. And, for this purpose, the bill also provides for FDA to subsidize outside groups that it feels can make a contribution to the review process. Since these would very likely include Nader's Health Research Group, which has repeatedly battered the industry with data wrenched from FDA under the Freedom of Information Act, the prospect of even broader outside scrutiny has industry alarmed.

If a drug is approved for sale, there's still another new requirement for industry: it must set up procedures for monitoring the drug for adverse reactions that went undetected in small test groups. The monitoring must go on for five years.

Other provisions of the bill permit FDA to give fast approval for limited use of so-called breakthrough drugs, i.e., drugs that represent a major advance in treatment of serious illnesses. In such cases, provisional monographs would be issued while normal testing is carried out.

FDA would also have authority under the new bill to yank drugs off the market, a process which is rather difficult to accomplish under the present law.

In general, then, the aim of the bill is to speed the arrival of new drugs by reducing the pre-marketing test period. In return, however, the manufacturers would be required to lay open their research records for pub-

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In Quotes: FDA Head on the "War on Cancer"

The following excerpts are from an address by Commissioner Donald Kennedy of the Food and Drug Administration, at a science writers seminar sponsored by the American Cancer Society, April 1, in Houston.

. . .nearly everyone in America can recite special tragedies involving loved ones that have all the features that make cancer so fearsome: its unpredictability, its often disfiguring effects, its lingering nature. These qualities have given cancer unique political leverage in national health policy. No other disease has ever had a war declared on it by an Administration. And, more significantly, no other disease has generated its own system of special regulation by the Congress.

If the medical approach to cancer can be thought of as a war — and nearly all of popular metaphor suggests that it is — then a contemporary comparison suggests itself. "Wars" against disease, like those the United States fought against other nations in the first half of the century, tended to be waged against explicitly laid battle lines over specific issues, and had decisive outcomes. . . .

By comparison, the war on cancer is a medical Vietnam. What we hoped would be a single disease with a magic-bullet cure has turned out to be a complex array of diseases, probably with multiple causation and almost certainly with no single cure. The more money we spend, the more complex the problem comes to appear. It is scarcely surprising that, as with the Vietnam War, some have been tempted to end it simply by declaring victory.

The psychological impact of all this on Americans has been complex and discouraging. Disappointment at the lack of a clean solution has resulted in some public mistrust of the biomedical research establishment — which probably *does* deserve rebuke for having over-promised in the past. . . .

[There is] a certain amount of sullenness at the news that between 60 and 90 per cent of cancers are environmentally caused, and therefore preventable primarily through changes in the way people live. The reaction is understandable; having been told that the expenditure of their money would result in the identification and eventual defeat of an external enemy, Americans are being told, "We have met the enemy, and they are us!"

Britain Rejects US Nuclear Reprocessing Plea

London. The Carter Administration's dislike of nuclear fuel reprocessing carries little weight in Europe.

The recent intervention by the State Department, which asked Britain to withhold a decision on plans to expand its Windscale reprocessing factory until completion of the US-inspired International Fuel Cycle Evaluation, played but a small part in the deliberations of Justice Parker — the high court judge who sat through 100 days of public hearings prior to writing his report on the proposed expansion at Windscale. Parker came out firmly in favor of the plans and dismissed suggestions that Britain was undermining the US's anti-proliferation initiative.

Three years ago, the state-owned nuclear fuel company, British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL), started talking to foreign electricity utilities, especially those in Japan, about contracts under which BNFL would reprocess fuel from their nuclear reactors.

At the beginning of March, Justice Parker recommended that BNFL should be given the go-ahead so that work could start "without delay" on the new plant. This would allow the company to complete negotiations for these contracts and fulfill orders while also meeting Britain's own reprocessing needs. However, the rising public interest in the issue meant that the Environment Secretary, Peter Shore, could not merely rubber-stamp the report and give his approval and at the same time maintain his political credibility. As it turned out, he postponed a final decision until after the report had been debated in the House of Commons.

BNFL first announced late in 1974 that it wanted to build a "thermal oxide reprocessing plant" (THORP). Talks went on until March 1976, when the Energy Secretary, Tony Benn, not someone known to be a friend of nuclear power, gave his approval for the project. The company wanted to spend $1.2 billion on a plant that could handle 600 tons of spent oxide fuel each year. This is about twice as much as Britain will need when the plant is built and the company hoped to use this extra capacity to capture foreign business worth $1.8 billion, including a Japanese contract worth up to $500 million. According to the company, the 600 te/yr plant will cost only 20 per cent more to build and operate than a 300 te/yr plant, saving Britain's electricity utilities around $330 million.

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DRUGS *(Continued From Page 5)*

lic scrutiny and keep close tabs on their products, post-marketing.

The bill adds another sweetener for the industry: the right to export drugs that are not licensed for use in the US. The only requirement is that the receiving country must certify that it's aware of the drug's legal status in the US and wants to import it. The HEW Secretary would be given authority to override an import request, but given the rapacious nature of the industry and the sorry condition of health ministries in many under-developed nations, this feature has properly been referred to by critics as a "license to kill."

Finally, the bill calls for establishing a National Center for Clinical Pharmacology, within HEW, but just where has not yet been determined. The center would support training and research, and grows out of FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy's concern about the state of the discipline. "Pharmacology," he told SGR, "gets too little attention in our medical schools." In general, he feels, it is an under-developed field and requires a boost from the federal government. He envisions the center as a program, rather than as a brick-and-mortar creation; its role, he says, would be to build up pharmacology throughout the country.

The drug bill has been the subject of several hearings in the Senate and will be taken up in the House next month. No one expects swift passage, but almost all involved feel that the present legislation, last amended in 1962, is obsolete, and that a new basic charter for regulating the introduction of new drugs is long overdue. —DSG

SGR's "Reliable" Sources

While SGR shares widespread doubts about the State Department's ability to handle big things, we have all along assumed that, with its ample staff resources, it could properly attend to little things — such as preparation of a reasonably accurate list of foreign science attaches based in Washington.

On the basis of this assumption, we requested such a list from the Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs — and we published that list in our issue of March 15, intending it to be a service to readers. To our shame, we did not scrutinize the list for accuracy or completeness, figuring that an item of this sort would surely be in order.

Not so, as we have been hearing from numerous readers. The list provided to us by the Department, it turns out, is chock full of misspelled names, omissions, out-of-date information, and assorted other errors. We apologize for packing so much mis-information into so little space, and as soon as possible will try to produce an accurate list.

. . . Windscale Judge Issues Strong Decision

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Starting in June 1976, BNFL picked its way through the planning minefield, only to come unstuck on March 7, 1977, when the Environment Secretary "called in" the planning application. This meant that there had to be a public inquiry into the proposal.

Shore gave the difficult job of Inspector — the man who hears the evidence and produces a report, with recommendations for action — to Justice Parker, who had proved his competence at handling such technically complex issues when he was the Inspector at the inquiry into the catastrophic explosion of the Flixborough chemical plant. Shore also named two technical assessors, Sir Edward Pochin, a radiologist, and Sir Frederick Warner, a chemical engineer. The public hearings lasted exactly 100 days, from June 14 to November 4, 1977. Parker's report was delivered to the Environment Secretary on January 26.

Britain's eager anti-nuclear movement had been frustrated by the country's immobility on nuclear matters — there hadn't been a new reactor order to oppose for more than a decade — so it seized upon the Windscale inquiry as an opportunity to proclaim all arguments against nuclear power. Witnesses were brought in from all directions — from Japan to the United States — and Justice Parker sat through all their arguments with no suggestion that he was anything other than an impartial observer who wanted to make up his mind on the strength of the evidence presented to him. He treated all witnesses, including those from the government and BNFL, with equal suspicion. So the Friends of the Earth and the other anti-THORP groups were stunned when Justice Parker's report came out so strongly in favor of BNFL; indeed he pushed the company's case even more strongly than its own representatives.

The Environment Secretary should, said Justice Parker, give planning permission for the project. His 87-page report dissects the case against reprocessing and finds it lacking on all counts.

The Inspector had asked three questions at the beginning of the inquiry. His first was: "Should oxide fuel from UK reactors be reprocessed in this country at all?" Answer: "a new plant for reprocessing oxide fuel from UK reactors is desirable and . . . a start upon such a project should be made without delay."

His second question was: "Should reprocessing take place at Windscale?" Answer: "I have no doubt that the answer to this question should be in the affirmative."

Finally, he asked: "Should the plant be double the size required for UK-spent fuel and used to reprocess foreign fuel?" Answer, also in the affirmative. Not only that, but he added that "a start on THORP and the receipt of foreign fuel for reprocessing would do something to relieve the pressure on non-nuclear-weapon states to develop their own facilities. It would also demonstrate that this country intends to honour at least the spirit, and as I think the letter, of its obligations under the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty]."

With nuclear proliferation the focus of current concern over nuclear power, it isn't surprising that the greatest criticisms of the Parker report were on this front. The International Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) was set up, following a US initiative, as a study of nuclear power with special reference to proliferation and how to limit it. Parker said in an analysis of the Carter policy that "it appears to be clear that the building of THORP would not be counter to US policy so long as no plutonium produced by it was exported."

To British eyes, US policy on such matters seems so opaque that it is impossible to disagree with Parker. However, this has not stopped the newspapers and their readers — in the correspondence columns — from interpreting the US stand to suit their own positions.

In a direct reference to the fuel cycle evaluation, Parker said: "It may be that, if permission is granted, INFCE will thereafter result in an international agreement not to reprocess commercially. If it does, it does not follow that THORP would be redundant. . . . Even, however, if THORP did become redundant, and I do not consider that it would, this would merely mean that some expenditure would have been wasted. This is an event which may always happen when plans are made to cover contingencies many years ahead. The expenditure may be regarded as an insurance premium."

BNFL interprets this as meaning that if INFCE does come out against reprocessing, and the world's nuclear nations accept this, Britain may have to stop work on the Windscale expansion. As there will be little hardware ordered before 1982, and INFCE is due to be completed before 1980, BNFL will have spent very little — perhaps a few million pounds — of the total cost of the new plant.

With so much pinned on the outcome of the public inquiry, it was inevitable that there would be calls for a debate on the report in the House of Commons before the project received final approval.

The House of Commons debate produced a resounding vote for expanding the Windscale plant. There were 186 votes for the expansion and 56 votes against.—MK

Peterson Announces Major Shakeup at OTA

Fresh from acquiring authority over all hirings and firings at the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 5), Russell Peterson, the newly appointed OTA director, has taken additional steps to bring order to the long-troubled agency.

At a staff meeting April 7, Peterson announced that the number of staff members reporting directly to him would be reduced from 24 to eight — thus ending the rather formless internal organization that he inherited when he became director in January.

In addition, Peterson announced that three operating divisions will handle all OTA assessment programs, though details have so far been worked out on only one — Energy, Telecommunications-Computers-Information Systems, and Technology and World Trade. The group will be headed by Lionel S. Johns, who formerly headed OTA's Energy Program. Richard Rowberg, assistant program manager, will move up to succeed Johns, and Henry Kelly, formerly technical assistant to the OTA director, will serve as assistant to Johns.

Another change provides for more emphasis on OTA's public participation activities, which will be handled by Robert Niblock, assisted by Emilia Goven. Both, however, will retain their present responsibilities for OTA's Oceans Program.

Finally, Peterson announced the resignation of Ellis Mottur, who has been staff director of a massive study of national research and development policies. The study, which has been underway for two years, was originally attached to OTA's Advisory Council. Peterson announced that the three separate panels making the study will be consolidated into one, and that the project will "be brought into OTA, responsible to the director."

Mottur, who is closely associated with Senator Kennedy, chairman of OTA's 12-member board of Congressional overseers, was a candidate for the post that Peterson now holds, but dropped out of the running when a bunch of Congressional cranks charged that Kennedy had ousted the previous director, Emilio Q. Daddario, to make an opening for Mottur. Mottur hasn't disclosed his post-departure plans. But his resignation shouldn't be taken as a signal that Peterson and Kennedy are at odds. Kennedy played a major part in getting Peterson appointed to the job. And in the just-announced shakeup, another Kennedy associate, Mary Murtagh, has been appointed to head what is described as a "general secretariat" for OTA and the Advisory Council.

In view of the widespread Congressional dissatisfaction with OTA prior to Daddario's resignation, the Peterson regime is widely regarded as a last-chance opportunity for getting the agency to function as a reliable and respected staff support for the Congress. The steps Peterson has taken so far have met approval both inside and outside the organization, which had acquired a reputation for internal chaos, bickering, and a dubious sense of priorities. Still to come, however, is performance that will persuade Congress that OTA is a valuable resource. It's too early in Peterson's reign to expect substantial evidence of that. But Congress is watching.

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